



UPDATE

POISON CONTROL PROGRAM

1-800-222-1222

www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov



About HRSA

The Health Resources and Services Administration is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. HRSA is the primary Federal agency responsible for improving access to health care services for people who are uninsured, isolated, or medically vulnerable. For more information about HRSA and its programs, visit www.hrsa.gov.



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Health IT for Children Toolbox Now Available Through HRSA's Web site



HRSA's Office of Health Information Technology has developed a new [Health IT for Children Toolbox](#) to help people in the children's health community use information technology to promote pediatric health and well-being. The toolbox is a compilation of health IT information targeted at children's health care

needs, ranging from pediatric electronic medical records to enrollment in children's health insurance coverage. This resource is designed for a diverse set of stakeholders, including State and Federal policymakers, providers, insurers, teachers, families, and other caregivers.

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CDC Data Show Increases in Unintentional Injury Deaths Due to Poisonings, But Decreases in Nonfatal Accidental Poisonings

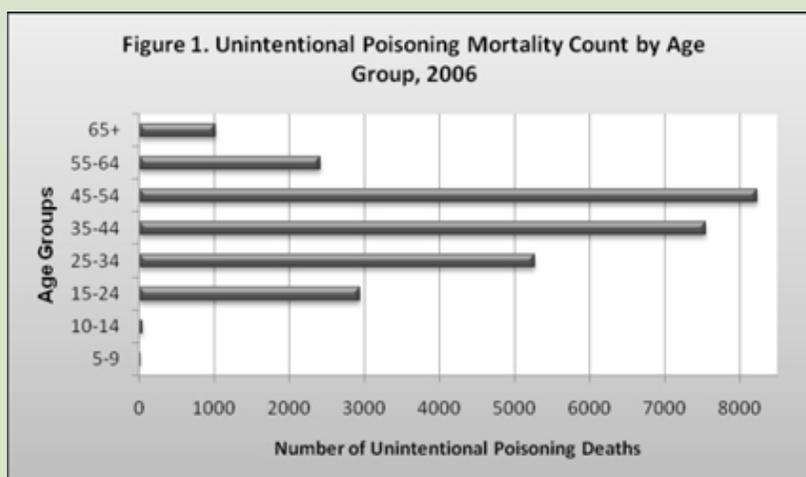
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated its *Ten Leading Causes of Death and Injury* charts to include the 2 most recent years of data available. The charts show an improvement in the number of unintentional poisonings treated in hospital emergency departments that did *not* result in fatalities. However, the charts also indicate an increase in the number of deaths due to unintentional poisoning incidents. The charts are categorized by causes of death by age group, causes of nonfatal injuries treated in hospital emergency departments, causes of unintentional injury deaths, and causes of deaths by violence.

Overall, deaths from any type of unintentional injury increased from 117,809 in 2005 to 121,599 in 2006. Within that group, unintentional poisoning is still a leading cause of death. ***Approximately 75 deaths per day are caused by unintentional poisonings, which are the number 1 cause of unintentional death among those ages 35 to 54.***

Unintentional poisoning was the 2nd leading cause of unintentional injury death among those ages 25 to 34 and ranked 3rd among the 15 to 24 and 55 to 64 age groups. Additionally, unintentional poisoning ranked in the top 10 causes of death among children ages 10 to 14 and seniors 65 and older.

While there are several causes of unintentional poisoning deaths in the United States, [a 2004 report showed that 95 percent of unintentional poisoning deaths](#) were caused by drugs, and more than half were a direct result of the misuse or abuse of prescription drugs such as benzodiazepines, anticonvulsants, and opioid pain medications.

The mortality count by age groups is shown in the chart below, which highlights the striking prominence of unintentional injury deaths among those ages 35 to 54.



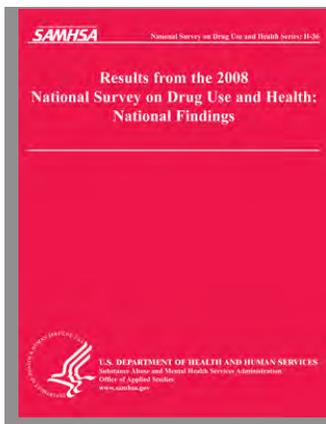
On the positive side, the number of nonfatal unintentional poisonings that result in a visit to the emergency department (ED) has decreased. Based on data from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), there were [678,890 ED](#) visits due to unintentional poisonings in 2007, down from [703,702](#) in 2006. This decrease caused

unintentional poisonings to drop from the 9th leading cause of nonfatal injuries treated in EDs in 2006 to the 10th leading cause in 2007. There were particular drops among infants under age 1 and young adults ages 25 to 34; in those groups, unintentional poisonings were no longer in the top 10 causes of nonfatal injuries in 2007.

Access the updated charts through the CDC's [National Center for Injury Prevention and Control](#).

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Prescription Drug Abuse Rates Fall, But Overall Illicit Drug Use Levels Remain High



The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently unveiled the results of the *2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. The annual survey is the largest of its kind and is the government's primary vehicle for determining how many people are abusing illegal drugs, pharmaceuticals, alcohol, and tobacco.

The results show the misuse of prescription drugs has decreased significantly between 2007 and 2008 among those aged 12 and older, including among adolescents. However, the overall level of current illicit drug use has remained steady at about 8 percent.

The results are available in the report, "[2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings](#)." The report focuses on trends between 2007 and 2008 and from 2002 to 2008, as well as differences across population subgroups in 2008.

Report copies may be obtained free of charge by calling SAMHSA's Health Information Network at 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) or by placing an order via [SAMHSA's Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information](#).

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Fall/Winter Poison Prevention Tips

- Other living creatures want to get into your warm home when the weather gets cold. Keep mouse poisons and ant baits inaccessible to young children and pets.
- Carbon monoxide (CO) is a leading cause of poison deaths. All fuel-burning devices make CO, which is colorless and odorless. To prevent a CO fatality, have at least one CO alarm in your home. Follow the manufacturer's instructions and product literature to test the alarm and to know when to replace it.
- Keep antifreeze in the container it came in, capped tightly, and in a locked cabinet.
- During cold and flu season, avoid using glass mercury thermometers. A glass thermometer can break in a child's mouth.
- Store salt used on driveways and sidewalks out of reach and in a locked cabinet to avoid chemical poisonings.



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Update on the National Safety Council's Poison Prevention Community Action Kit

Through a contract with HRSA, the National Safety Council (NSC) has updated its poison prevention kit to create a new *Poison Prevention Educator Kit*. The improved kit emphasizes Poison Centers as a leading resource for poison prevention activities and facilitates poison education in the workforce and community.

Designed to help employers ensure that their workers are as safe from poisonings at home as they are at work, the kit provides a number of strategies for educating employees. It also provides tools for all audiences to conduct outreach in their communities.

Both the workplace and community outreach sections of the kit highlight three topics: poison prevention 101, hazardous chemical safety, and medication safety. For each of these topics, the kit provides background information, strategies for the types of activities to consider implementing, information on conducting an event, and materials to use in conducting activities.

A number of Poison Center Educators, as well as representatives from HRSA, NSC chapters, and the American Association of Poison Control Centers, provided input on the kit. To maximize the kit's use, the NSC sponsored a series of training workshops for NSC chapter representatives and Poison Center Educators. The workshops focused on promoting the kit, identifying at-risk populations, and establishing partnerships between NSC chapters and Poison Centers. Training sessions have been held in NSC chapter locations across the Nation, including Itasca, IL; Omaha, NE; Baltimore, MD; Atlanta, GA; and Denver, CO.

Responses to date indicate that the training sessions have been a worthwhile, hands-on opportunity to network and brainstorm ideas for effective poison prevention outreach and promotion. "The training session was a wonderful opportunity to create a partnership between the Poison Center Educators and [NSC] Chapter Representatives. We were able to combine our knowledge, resources, and strategies to target specific areas of our communities," said Shannon K. Holcombe, education coordinator from the Oklahoma Poison Control Center. Holcombe co-facilitated the Omaha training session with Kristin Lolmaugh, senior program manager with the NSC.

"The Educator kit is a well-planned and practical tool not only for Educators, but also for [Poison Center] managing directors who are involved in public education! The training sessions were collaborative and kept the audience engaged," said Allison Muller, PharmD, DABAT, managing director of the Poison Control Center at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Muller attended the training in Baltimore.

For other participants, the opportunity to partner with the NSC was a tremendous asset, as the Council has an established track record of working with adults—a high-risk group not traditionally targeted by Poison Centers. "I think the interpersonal contacts made at the trainings have really stoked the collaborative process. We are planning several joint projects here in Florida, so I see positive results already," said Wendy Stephan, health education coordinator from the Florida Poison Information Center in Miami, who co-facilitated the Atlanta training with Lolmaugh.

NSC and HRSA expect to unveil the kit online in late fall 2009. For more information, please contact Kristin Lolmaugh at Kristin.lolmaugh@nsc.org or 202-974-2469.



Liz Barta, BSN, CHES, and Poison Education Specialist from the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center provides information about Poison Look-A-Likes to training participants in Denver, CO, in August 2009.

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Poison Help Campaign Update

Recently HRSA approved a 2-year communications plan to enhance the Poison Help Campaign. The plan was informed by a review of existing campaign literature, a national survey, a focus group of Poison Center Educators, and feedback from the American Association of Poison Control Centers. Here's a preview of what you can expect to see over the next 2 years.

The Web campaign will include a redesign of the current [Poison Help](#) site and the development of a corresponding Spanish Web site. Changes to the Web sites will emphasize the use of social media and, particularly, blogger engagement, as well as a mobile device campaign.

Research helped to inform the communications plan and will continue to inform campaign messages, audiences, and tactics evaluation. Specifically, the Poison Help Campaign will conduct a benchmark survey to be revisited each fall, and hold focus groups with Poison Centers and the general public to provide feedback on messages, materials, and the Web sites.

While the need for developing printed campaign materials is not extensive, there are a few things the Poison Help Campaign will do over the next 2 years, including revising the look and feel of the Poison Control Program Newsletter (which should be noticeable here). Other new materials may include a new campaign brochure to assist in reaching out to new potential partner organizations, campaign posters for hospital waiting areas, Spanish-language Poison Help business cards, and mass transit advertising in select markets.

Campaign promotion will include monitoring media coverage of local and national poison incidents to identify outreach opportunities, updating the National Poison Prevention Week Planner for 2010, distributing the current radio poison jingles, and developing new radio and TV PSAs for distribution.

HRSA welcomes the opportunity to work with other organizations interested in spreading the word about poison prevention and awareness. Over the next year, HRSA will identify those organizations and work to build mutually beneficial relationships around a common interest in poison prevention. The Poison Help Campaign welcomes any feedback you may have by way of the Poison Control Program at HRSA by e-mailing pstroup@hrsa.gov or the Poison Help Google Group if you are a Poison Center.

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Gearing up for 2010 National Poison Prevention Week



National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW), designated as the third week of March each year, is a time to promote community involvement in poisoning prevention. It is also an opportunity for Poison Centers to educate people on what to do in the event of a poisoning, as well as to reinforce the Poison Center's role as the local resource on poison.

With NPPW 2010 soon approaching and planning likely underway in your community, here is a brief overview of some of the 2009 activities that Poison Centers conducted. This should spark new conversations about prevention activities among community members and best practices among Poison

Centers. Whether it was their 1st event or the 21st time they marked the occasion, Poison Centers facilitated community discussions during NPPW 2009 by creating and distributing poison prevention materials, organizing local health fairs, leading seminars to discuss common poison incidents, garnering proclamations from local government officials, and launching community-based train-the-trainer programs.

NPPW 2010 will take place from March 14 to 20, and HRSA encourages you to use this week to highlight poison prevention awareness in your community. Please reach out to your local Poison Centers for more information on how you can partner with them. You can find your local Poison Center by calling 1-800-222-1222 or by visiting [Poison Help](#). You can also download the [NPPW Planner](#) that will provide you with ideas for events and activities, fact sheets about poisoning, and strategies to promote your events with media and community outreach. Check back frequently for 2010 updates to the Planner.

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Dr. Steven Marcus receives top honors at the 2009 NACCT

Dr. Steven M. Marcus, medical director of the New Jersey Poison Information and Education System, was honored by the American College of Medical Toxicology at the 2009 North American Congress of Clinical Toxicology in San Antonio, TX, on September 24. Dr. Marcus was presented with the Ellenhorn Award to honor his extraordinary contributions to the field of medical toxicology. In his keynote address, Dr. Marcus fondly described examples of how his “astute team of poison specialists and a medical toxicologist at the bedside” helped delineate and terminate the outbreak of disease with medical detective work. The HRSA Poison Control Program congratulates Dr. Marcus for his distinguished service and achievements spanning more than 30 years.

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